

A circular cross-section of a tree trunk, showing the growth rings. The left half of the circle is in natural wood tones (grey and brown), while the right half is overlaid with a vibrant green color. The text is centered over the green portion.

CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS Support Entity Feasibility Study

Study Findings
April 2017



Study Goal

Assess needs and recommend structure.

As envisioned in the Parks Forward Commission's recommendations, conduct a feasibility study for a statewide park support entity that will partner with the Department of Parks and Recreation.

Study Goal

Assess needs and recommend structure.

- Get as much clarity as possible on the need for a statewide park support entity, its role and mission scope, and how it will function with other partners
- Create shared understanding between the Parks Forward Commission, its funders, the Department, and the California State Parks Foundation

Scope of Work

October 2016 – April 2017

- Engage stakeholders, synthesize work to date, assess needs and opportunities, and gather best practices
- Propose possible models for the support entity and gather feedback from stakeholders
- Produce a feasibility study including:
 - mission scope, partnership approach, project prioritization process, potential entity structure and business model, board responsibilities, and recommended plan for initial board member outreach

Methodology

Distill lessons from California, other systems, and other fields to produce actionable recommendations and tools.





**What organizational scenarios
will meet California's needs?**

Partner Transitions

- California Department of Parks and Recreation has been undertaking its own transformation process
- California State Parks Foundation has undertaken its own strategic review and is reinvesting in the activities and programs it uniquely does well, with a stronger emphasis on its advocacy work
- These stakeholders and others are in strong alignment that there is a need for a new statewide park support organization

Project Environment

The themes below arose from meetings, interviews, and open-ended survey feedback. They describe the attitudes and partner environment surrounding the project.

- A time of transition and a desire for excellence
- Credibility, confidence, and trust
- CSPF transitions
- Perceived threats and crowding
- Desire for clearly defined roles



What **needs** are best met by
the new entity?



Statewide Support Needs

Potrero Group used survey and interview data to gauge the current level of need for statewide park partner support in California. Below is a summary of our assessment at this point in time.

Function	Current Need	Current State-wide Partner
Systemwide Fundraising and Revenue Development	High	Historically California State Parks Foundation; none currently at state level
Capital Project Planning and Implementation	High	Numerous challenges; various partners working to solve
Private Investment and Business Partnerships	High	None
Statewide Marketing of Parks	High	None
Diversity and Building New Audiences	High – needs to be a focus for all	Some partners, little coordination

Statewide Support Needs

Function	Current Need	Current State-wide Partner
Advocacy: Park Funding and Needs	High	California State Parks Foundation with local partners
Advocacy: Defending Against Threats to Parks	High	California State Parks Foundation
Shared Services and Technical Assistance	High	California State Parks Foundation and CALPA
Volunteer Engagement	High	Many existing partners
Network Facilitation	Medium	None
Consulting for Park/Partner Effectiveness	Medium	None
Education and Youth Development	Medium	Many existing partners
Product and Retail Development	Medium	A few larger organizations
Program Incubation	Low - Medium	Many existing partners
Conservation and Service Work	Low	California Conservation Corps and Regional Corps



What **key functions** will the entity perform?

Suggested Focus Areas

- Fundraising and revenue generation
- Capital projects planning and implementation
- Private investment and business projects
- State-wide marketing efforts
- Projects and programs to increase access and build new audiences



Fundraising & Revenue



Capital Projects



Private Investment & Business Partnerships

FIND YOUR PARK

FINDYOURPARK.COM

The background of the entire slide is a photograph of a sunset or sunrise. The sky is filled with orange and yellow light, with dark, silhouetted clouds. In the foreground, a group of about seven people are silhouetted against the bright sky. They appear to be standing on a grassy hill or dune, looking out towards the horizon. Some are holding binoculars or cameras. The overall mood is peaceful and scenic.

State-wide Marketing



Park Access & New Audiences

Sharp Focus on Initial Projects

One to two marquee projects should be selected that are guaranteed to succeed and will quickly establish the organization's reputation and track record.

- Fundraise and implement one to two highly visible park improvements
- Create one new public-private partnership that serves new park audiences
- Lead a statewide marketing campaign for parks
- Develop an app and/or digital communication tools



What **structures** will support its functions and partnerships?



Organizational Best Practices

Given our experience with organizational and business strategy, Potrero Group believes the support organization will need to have the following attributes in order to succeed and flourish.

- A shared vision for park excellence
- Strong partnership culture and close alignment with gov't partners
- Engagement with a broad community to identify statewide priorities
- Engaged and effective board members
- Skilled executive leadership
- Focus and clarity of purpose
- Dependable revenue streams and effective fundraising strategies
- An enthusiastic, engaged, and closely-aligned government partner
- Early wins that generate momentum



Next Steps...



What **business model** will ensure its sustainability?

Business Plan

May 2017 – November 2017

- What is the appropriate revenue mix that will allow this organization to become sustainable and achieve the goals envisioned by the Department and stakeholders?
- Can the organization secure three years of anticipated revenue in advance?
- What are the organization's most important staffing roles to fulfill?
- What should be the staff and board make-up and expertise?
- What should be the initial focus (first five years) for success?
- What are the greatest risks the new organization can expect to navigate in its first five years?

Business Plan

Project Phase	Summer 2017	Fall 2017	Winter 2018	Spring 2018	Summer 2018
Business Planning					
Board Recruitment					
Incorporate 501(c)3					
Recruit Director					
Execute MOU					
Public Launch Event					
Hire Additional Staff					

Thank you

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